16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

873
teachers, whose influence and attention earn for the children of those families the [829]
greater share of scholarship funds.

Not only has education abroad been a major pull factor in emigration, but 167
local education as well in the form of a summer language school for mainland 177
children, which was established in 1960 and has convened for two months each 874
year ever since. Over a hundred students—in two shifts of a month apiece— [658]
attend the school, where in addition to learning Irish formally and speaking it in
the homes where they are lodged, they are instructed in singing, playing musical
instruments, and set dancing in the traditional mold. Monies from Gaeltacht
Eireann support the director from the mainland and the Inis Beag headmaster who
teach, a skilled musician who provides music for dancing and also instructs, and
the students. Eight hundred pounds were channeled into the local economy in [668]
1960 by this nativistic endeavor hopefully aimed at propagating Gaelic and halting
emigration. The influence of the visiting children, who interact with their island
counterparts at home and at outdoor dances each evening, is considerable; the
outsiders tend to be critical of conditions in Inis Beag and boast of the superiority
in every dimension of life on the mainland. It is questionable whether the school
has diminished the push effect of emigration by enlivening the social atmosphere
of the island as much as it has increased the pull effect by creating even more dis-
content among young people. There are those who denounce the language school [829]
on the grounds that the visiting children speak more English than Irish in the 186
local homes; that many islanders in their greed for profit do not provide adequately
for the students assigned to them; and that some of the mainlanders are openly
promiscuous and thus subvert the morality of Inis Beag youths.

Since 1960, priests have become more realistic in their appraisal of the 167
causes of emigration and have taken steps to enliven further the social milieu of 168
the island. They have been responsible for introducing set dancing and tin whistle 653
playing instruction in the national school, for organizing yearly athletic, canoe 344
rowing, and dancing competitions between folk of Inis Beag and Inis Thiar, for [793]
building the dance hall to serve various purposes, and for setting up a small lend-
ing library of books in the school. The hall was built with a Gaeltacht Eireann [657]
grant, the free labor of island men, and money gifts solicited from interested
parties all over the world. It resembles its predecessor—the boathouse on the
strand built by the coast guard company—in that it functions as dance hall, trade
school, storage house, and meeting place; but it is much larger and better con-
structed and has many more facilities than the latter. The folk view it as a mixed [829]
blessing, for they disliked building it without being paid wages, and feel now
that it is not available to them enough of the time, and when it is, they are
charged by the curate to attend dances and view television. Many believe that [657]
church and government should have provided wages to the builders to compen-
sate for farming and other time lost, and that "the key of the hall shouldn't be in
the priest's pocket." Since its completion, the building has accommodated most of [874]
the activities of the language school.

In contrast to the islanders who are deeply committed to the local culture 167
and fear that Inis Beag will become depopulated within the next generation, there 168
829